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APPLICATION NO.	FILING DATE	FIRST NAMED INVENTOR	ATTORNEY DOCKET NO.	CONFIRMATION NO.
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10/591,071

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08/13/2009

EXAMINER

ZENATI, AMAL S

ART UNIT

PAPER NUMBER

2614

MAIL DATE

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PAPER

Please find below and/or attached an Office communication concerning this application or proceeding.

The time period for reply, if any, is set in the attached communication.

Office Action Summary	Application No. 10/591,071	Applicant(s) VAN LOON ET AL.	
	Examiner AMAL ZENATI	Art Unit 2614	

-- The MAILING DATE of this communication appears on the cover sheet with the correspondence address --

Period for Reply

A SHORTENED STATUTORY PERIOD FOR REPLY IS SET TO EXPIRE 3 MONTH(S) OR THIRTY (30) DAYS, WHICHEVER IS LONGER, FROM THE MAILING DATE OF THIS COMMUNICATION.

- Extensions of time may be available under the provisions of 37 CFR 1.136(a). In no event, however, may a reply be timely filed after SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- If NO period for reply is specified above, the maximum statutory period will apply and will expire SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- Failure to reply within the set or extended period for reply will, by statute, cause the application to become ABANDONED (35 U.S.C. § 133). Any reply received by the Office later than three months after the mailing date of this communication, even if timely filed, may reduce any earned patent term adjustment. See 37 CFR 1.704(b).

Status

- 1) ☒ Responsive to communication(s) filed on 07 May 2009.
- 2a) ☒ This action is **FINAL**. 2b) ☐ This action is non-final.
- 3) ☐ Since this application is in condition for allowance except for formal matters, prosecution as to the merits is closed in accordance with the practice under *Ex parte Quayle*, 1935 C.D. 11, 453 O.G. 213.

Disposition of Claims

- 4) ☒ Claim(s) 1,2 and 4-11 is/are pending in the application.
- 4a) Of the above claim(s) _____ is/are withdrawn from consideration.
- 5) ☐ Claim(s) _____ is/are allowed.
- 6) ☒ Claim(s) 1,2, and 4-11 is/are rejected.
- 7) ☐ Claim(s) _____ is/are objected to.
- 8) ☐ Claim(s) _____ are subject to restriction and/or election requirement.

Application Papers

- 9) ☐ The specification is objected to by the Examiner.
- 10) ☐ The drawing(s) filed on _____ is/are: a) ☐ accepted or b) ☐ objected to by the Examiner.
Applicant may not request that any objection to the drawing(s) be held in abeyance. See 37 CFR 1.85(a).
Replacement drawing sheet(s) including the correction is required if the drawing(s) is objected to. See 37 CFR 1.121(d).
- 11) ☐ The oath or declaration is objected to by the Examiner. Note the attached Office Action or form PTO-152.

Priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119

- 12) ☐ Acknowledgment is made of a claim for foreign priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119(a)-(d) or (f).
- a) ☐ All b) ☐ Some * c) ☐ None of:
1. ☐ Certified copies of the priority documents have been received.
2. ☐ Certified copies of the priority documents have been received in Application No. _____.
3. ☐ Copies of the certified copies of the priority documents have been received in this National Stage application from the International Bureau (PCT Rule 17.2(a)).

* See the attached detailed Office action for a list of the certified copies not received.

Attachment(s)

- | | |
|--|---|
| 1) <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Notice of References Cited (PTO-892) | 4) <input type="checkbox"/> Interview Summary (PTO-413) |
| 2) <input type="checkbox"/> Notice of Draftsperson's Patent Drawing Review (PTO-948) | Paper No(s)/Mail Date. _____ |
| 3) <input type="checkbox"/> Information Disclosure Statement(s) (PTO/SB/08) | 5) <input type="checkbox"/> Notice of Informal Patent Application |
| Paper No(s)/Mail Date _____ | 6) <input type="checkbox"/> Other: _____ |

DETAILED ACTION

Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 102

1. The following is appropriate paragraphs of 35 U.S.C. 102 that form the basis for the rejections under this section made in this Office action:

A person shall be entitled to a patent unless -

(b) the invention was patented or described in a printed publication in this or a foreign country or in public use or on sale in this country, more than one year prior to the date of application for patent in the United States.

2. **Claims 1 - 2, and 4 - 11** are rejected under 35 U.S.C 102 (b) as being anticipated by **Fuhrmann et al (US Patent No.: 6,347,218 B1; hereinafter Fuhrmann)**

Consider **claim 1, Fuhrmann** clearly shows and discloses a discussion unit (10) for use in a conference system, wherein the discussion unit (10) is adapted to be connected to at least one second discussion unit (10), wherein the discussion unit (10) comprises an essentially closed casing (410) and at least one exchangeable portion (420) is configured as at least one closed rim (422) that is removably mounted to the closed casing (410) (abstract; fig. 1 and fig. 3; col. 3, lines 24-50; and col. 4, lines 15-21).

Consider **claim 2, Fuhrmann** clearly shows the discussion unit (10), The discussion unit (10) according to the preceding claim, wherein the exchangeable portion (420) at least partially covers at least one outside part (424, 412) of the casing (410) (fig. 1, label 14).

Consider **claim 4, Fuhrmann** clearly shows the method, wherein the rim (422) covers at least one edge portion (424) of the discussion unit (10) (fig. 4, label 6).

Consider **claim 5, Fuhrmann** clearly shows the discussion unit (10), wherein the casing (410) comprises at least one operating panel (412), the operating panel (412) having at least one panel base (414) and at least one operating element (416), wherein the panel base (414) is at least partially surrounded by the rim (422) (fig. 1, labels: 4 and 6; and col. 2, lines 53-67).

Consider **claim 6, Fuhrmann** clearly shows the discussion unit (10), wherein the at least one exchangeable portion (420) is mounted to the casing (410) by at least one interconnection (426), the at

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least one interconnection (426) comprising at least one of the following: a form-fit interconnection; a force-fit interconnection (426), preferably a snap- on mounting and/or a snap-hook (428) and/or a catch (438) (fig. 1, labels: 12, 13, and 14).

Consider **claim 7, Fuhrmann** clearly shows the discussion unit (10), wherein the casing (410) comprises at least one first section (452) and at least one second section (454), the at least one first section (452) and the at least one second section (454) being adapted to be attached to each other, wherein the at least one interconnection (426) is inaccessible from the outside of the casing (410) when the at least one first Section (452) and the at least one second section (454) are attached to each other (fig. 1, labels: 2, 6, 12, and 14).

Consider **claim 8, Fuhrmann** clearly shows the discussion unit (10), wherein the at least one first section (452) and the at least one second section (454) are adapted to be attached to each other by means of screwing (fig. 1, labels: 13 and 4).

Consider **claim 9, Fuhrmann** clearly shows the discussion unit (10), an exchangeable portion (420) adapted to be used as the at least one exchangeable portion (420) in a discussion unit (10) (abstract).

Consider **claim 10, Fuhrmann** clearly shows the discussion unit (10), wherein a set of exchangeable portions (420), the set comprising at least two exchangeable portions (420) according to the preceding claim, wherein at least two of the exchangeable portions (420) differ with regard to color and/or material (col. 1, lines 41-46).

Consider **claim 11, Fuhrmann** clearly shows the discussion unit (10), wherein a conference system comprising at least two discussion units (10) according to one of the preceding claims referring to a discussion unit (10) (fig. 1; and col. 2, lines 45-51).

Response to Arguments

3. The present Office Action is in response to Applicant's amendment filed on May 07, 2009. Applicant has cancelled claim 3, amended claims 1 and 2; claims 1-2, and 4-11 are now pending in the present application.

4. Applicant argues regarding the claim 1 on pages 5 - 7 of the Applicant's Response that "Examiner indicates that Fuhrmann's electronic device comprises a discussion unit for use in a conference system, as claimed, applicants disagree because Fuhrmann's device is a cell phone."

The Examiner respectfully disagrees with Applicant's argument, Fuhrmann clearly teaches that the invention relates to an electronic device with reference to a cordless telephone or mobile phone which serves as an *example* of an electronic device; however, the invention can also be wire-connected telephones, in television sets, CD players, and etc. (abstract, and col. 2, lines 46-52). Moreover, the original specification states "a system comprising at least two discussion units is referred to as a conference system" (page 1, lines 20-25). Then the original specification states "the electronic components of the conference system have matched with furnishings and decorating" (page 2, lines 10-12). Therefore, the discussion unit is an electronic device as defined in the original specification. Moreover, a telephone is used for conference.

5. Applicant argues regarding the claims 1 and 3 on pages 5 - 7 of the Applicant's Response that "Fuhrmann's device becomes a closed casing only after exchangeable phone cover (14) is connected. Applicants' closed casing does not require an exchangeable cover to be connected."

The Examiner respectfully disagrees with Applicant's argument, claim 1 recites "wherein the discussion unit (10) comprises an essentially closed casing (410) and at least one exchangeable portion (420) is configured as at least one closed rim (422) that is removable mounted to the closed casing (410)."

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Fuhrmann clearly shows in Figure 1 that the electronic device housing (1) has a closed casing since the external wall element (14) which at least partially covers the housing wall (5), the external wall has also the closed rim (abstract, and fig. 1). Moreover, Fuhrmann clearly shows in Figure 1 the rim 6 of the housing 1 is covered by the exchangeable external wall element (14) (figs.: 1 and 3; and col. 3, lines 24-50). As a result, Fuhrmann discloses clearly claims 1 and 3.

Therefore, in view of the above reasons, Examiner maintains rejections.

Conclusion

THIS ACTION IS MADE FINAL. Applicant is reminded of the extension of time policy as set forth in 37 CFR 1.136(a).

A shortened statutory period for reply to this final action is set to expire THREE MONTHS from the mailing date of this action. In the event a first reply is filed within TWO MONTHS of the mailing date of this final action and the advisory action is not mailed until after the end of the THREE-MONTH shortened statutory period, then the shortened statutory period will expire on the date the advisory action is mailed, and any extension fee pursuant to 37 CFR 1.136(a) will be calculated from the mailing date of the advisory action. In no event, however, will the statutory period for reply expire later than SIX MONTHS from the mailing date of this final action.

Any inquiry concerning this communication or earlier communications from the examiner should be directed to Amal Zenati whose telephone number is 571- 270- 1947. The examiner can normally be reached on Monday-Friday from 8:00am-5:00pm.

If attempts to reach the examiner by telephone are unsuccessful, the examiner's supervisor, Curtis Kuntz can be reached on 571- 272- 7499. The fax phone number for the organization where this application or proceeding is assigned is 571- 273-8300.

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Information regarding the status of an application may be obtained from the Patent Application Information Retrieval (PAIR) system. Status information for published applications may be obtained from either Private PAIR or Public PAIR. Status information for unpublished applications is available through Private PAIR only. For more information about the PAIR system, see <http://pair-direct.uspto.gov>. Should you have questions on access to the Private PAIR system, contact the Electronic Business Center (EBC) at 866-217-9197 (toll-free).

/CURTIS KUNTZ/
Supervisory Patent Examiner, Art Unit 2614

/Amal Zenati/
Patent Examiner, Art Unit 2614

August 5, 2009